Correctional Service of Canada
Additional information

For any questions or further information or details, please contact:

- **Case Management Team**
- **Program Delivery Officer (PDO)**
- **Program Psychologist**

Regional Headquarters:

Atlantic
Phone: (506) 851-2031
Fax: (506) 851-6316

Ontario
Phone: (613) 536-4283
Fax: (613) 530-3006

Quebec
Phone: (450) 967-3355
Fax: (450) 967-3463

Prairies
Phone: (306) 975-5220
Fax: (306) 975-5401

Pacific
Phone: (604) 870-2575
Fax: (604) 870-2612

National Headquarters:
Reintegration Programs Division
340 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0P9
Phone: (613) 996-4628
Fax: (613) 996-0428
Web Site: www.csc-scc.gc.ca

Author and contributors:

Marcel Kabundi, LL. M.; M.Sc. (criminology)
Manager, Ethnocultural Programs
Phone: (613) 996-9744
Fax: (613) 996-0428
E-mail: kabundimk.csc-scc.gc.ca

Yvette Beckles
Project Assistant, Ethnocultural Programs
Phone: (613) 947-0505
Fax: (613) 996-0428

Correctional Service Canada | Service correctionnel Canada

Overview of Correctional Programs

INTRODUCTION OF CORRECTIONAL PROGRAMS FOR ETHNOCULTURAL MINORITY GROUP OFFENDERS

(COMMISSIONER'S DIRECTIVE 767, PAR.2)

Cette publication est également offerte en français sous le titre: *Survol des Programmes Correctionnels.*

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Foreword

Welcome to the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), the federal government agency responsible for administering sentences of imprisonment of two years or more imposed by the courts. Depending on the length of your sentence, you will be spending time at one of our institutions, which have various levels of security, before becoming eligible to be granted conditional release by the National Parole Board. The CSC is responsible for about 23,000 inmates in accordance with the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA)*, the mission of the CSC and the social and cultural traditions of Canada.

The CSC must meet two types of offender needs: the basic needs for housing, food, clothing, health care and safety, and the need for offenders to correct the factors relating to criminal behaviour in order to reduce recidivism.

Although the CSC must ensure that correctional programs and services are available, and provide an environment that promotes change, each offender is responsible for changing his or her behaviour in response to the particular needs (the driving forces behind their deviance) that the correctional planning process shows in their case.

The most pronounced offender needs are linked to cognitive deficiencies, substance abuse, illiteracy, mental disorders, sexual deviance, and antisocial behaviours, attitudes and values. These needs are not mutually exclusive: many offenders have several needs, making it necessary to integrate intervention programs.

The programs described in this pamphlet must be directly linked to the needs of offenders, especially the needs that will lead to pro-social behaviour if they are adequately met. The programs are aimed at developing behaviour, beliefs and attitudes in order to produce lasting changes in behaviour.

Ethnocultural minority offenders are encouraged strongly to identify themselves and to clearly express their special needs so that new correctional programs can be developed and put in place.

I invite you to read this pamphlet and encourage you to actively participate in the programs that your situation calls for.

Pierre Allard

A/Assistant Commissioner, Correctional Operations and Programs

Please note: This pamphlet does not include all the information concerning each program offered by the CSC. For more details, please refer to the addresses at the back of this pamphlet.

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1. LIVING SKILLS PROGRAM

WHAT IS THE PROGRAM ABOUT?

The Living Skills Program is a series of six programs and two booster programs directed towards meeting the needs of offenders throughout their sentence, both in the institutions and the community. These programs are the:

- Cognitive Skills Program, and Boosting Cognitive Skil
- Parenting Skills Program;
- Living Without Violence (in the Family) Program;
- Anger and Other Emotions Management Program, and Anger and Other Emotions Booster Program;
- Community Integration (*for more details see 7. "Ethnocultural Programs"*); and
- Leisure Skills Program.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The Living Skills Program was developed out of a ne for sound rehabilitation programs for offenders. Through the development and implementation of th Living Skills initiative, the CSC demonstrated its commitment to reduce recidivism by providing rehabilitation programs tailored to the unique needs and problems of offenders.

Each component of the Living Skills Program has be developed and implemented using selection criteria specific to the goals of that program.

PROGRAMMING CONTENT

Cognitive Skills Program

The Cognitive Skills Program is the core component Living Skills programming. Based on the cognitive model of delinquency prevention and offender rehabilitation, it attempts to train offenders in those skills and values that research indicates are required for pro-social adaptation. What or how an offender thinks, how he or she views the world or understan people, what values he or she has, and how he or sl

attempts to solve problems are factors that play an important role in criminal behaviour.

Boosting Cognitive Skills

The Boosting Cognitive Skills Program is a review of the skills taught in the Cognitive Skills Program, with an emphasis on self-management training. Offenders do not learn new material; rather, they learn to monitor their thoughts and behaviour daily (self-monitoring techniques), and complete exercises and homework that require them to apply these skills to their daily situations.

Parenting Skills Program

The program was designed in recognition of the stress that incarceration places on family relationships. It helps offenders develop and improve the skills they need to relate effectively to their families, it encourages them to maintain bonds with their families and communities, and it fosters a supportive network for the development of strong, healthy ties that contribute to a reduction in recidivism. A recent update to the program provides components for women offenders. When delivered in the community, the program accommodates spouses of offenders who wish to attend.

Living Without Violence (in the Family) Program

The Living Without Violence (in the Family) Program targets the attitudes and behaviours of offenders who use aggression in a family context. It differs from other components of the Living Skills programs because its goal is not skill acquisition. Instead, the purpose of this program is education and awareness, focusing on the individual's attitudes, beliefs and values as they relate to issues concerning family violence

Anger and Other Emotions Management Program

The Anger and Other Emotions Management Program targets anger and other emotions associated with aggressive and anti-social behaviour. It takes an educational treatment approach to train offenders in skills to manage these emotions, thereby reducing the likelihood of future violent behaviour.

Anger and Other Emotions Management Booster Program

This short program reviews concepts and applies skills taught in the longer program. It is delivered primarily in the community.

Leisure Skills Program

The program is for offenders with a criminal history related to their inappropriate use of leisure time, or whose current leisure pursuits are not beneficial to coping or adapting, either inside the institution or in the community.

HOW IS THE PROGRAM BENEFICIAL?

This program and its components address particular need areas of offenders as required in their preparation for release, and to help them develop personal skills in order to reintegrate into the community.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAM

WHAT IS THE PROGRAM ABOUT?

The Substance Abuse Program encourages offenders to think about the impact that their alcohol and drug use, or that of their family members, has on their lives. The program provides offenders with an opportunity to evaluate the role alcohol and drugs has played in their lives, to examine the influence of substance use on their criminal behaviour, and to recognize that they need help to deal with alcohol, drugs and related personal problems.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Alcohol and drug use is related highly to offending and to recidivism. Substance abuse within correctional facilities also contributes to a hostile and threatening institutional environment.

Research indicates that the majority of federal offenders have experienced some kind of problem in their life related to their use of alcohol or other drugs. Murder and rape, as well as property offences and other non-violent crimes, are associated highly with alcohol and drug use. Recently the CSC Task Force on Mental Healt reported that lifetime prevalence rates of alcohol and drug dependence, dependence alone or in combination with antisocial personality disorder, is 80 percent.

Besides the direct effects of alcohol and drugs on aggressive and risk-taking behaviour, many crimes are committed related to the drug trade. Legal problems related to alcohol and drugs fall into three areas: offences committed while getting and selling drugs; crimes committed while under the influence of alcoh or drugs; and offences resulting from violation of feder and provincial alcohol and other drug legislation or regulation.

PROGRAM GOALS

The goals of the Substance Abuse Program are to:

- increase offender knowledge and understanding of the social and personal costs of various types of drug and the immediate and long-term effects of alcoho and drug use on physical, social, psychological, cognitive, legal, vocational/employment and family functioning;
- develop offender self-management through coping skills and problem solving procedures;
- give offenders practice in social skills and communication skills;
- practice conflict resolution and apply assertiveness training;
- develop a lifestyle management plan;
- develop a pre-release plan and relapse prevention plan; and
- promote aftercare and post-program maintenance through an awareness of community links.

HOW IS THE PROGRAM BENEFICIAL?

The relationship between substance abuse, past criminal behaviour and risk for future criminal behaviour increases dramatically with the severity of offenders' substance abuse problems. Over the past few years, CSC institutional and community-based programs have treated over 5,000 offenders annually.

In addition, more than 3,000 offenders participate each year in other adjunctive counseling, awareness, and support activities.

OTHER SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAMS

CSC's core of substance abuse programs includes:

- Offender Substance Abuse Pre-Release (OSAPP);
- OSAPP Maintenance Sessions;
- Substance Abuse Program for Long-Term Offenders; and
- Community Correctional Relapse Prevention and Maintenance Program (CHOICES).

SEX OFFENDER PROGRAM

WHAT IS THE PROGRAM ABOUT?

The sex offender program, which takes a cognitive-behavioural approach, is delivered to anyone convicted of a sex offence or a sexually motivated crime, and to anyone who admitted to a sex offence. The program emphasizes the need for offenders to take responsibility for their actions, recognize their cycle of offending, identify their high-risk situations, and develop strategies to prevent relapse.

Overall, cognitive-behavioural sex offender treatment programs providing extended relapse prevention support in the community have contributed to a reduction in reoffending.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The *Standards and Guidelines for the Provision of Services to Sex Offenders* was approved in March 1996, following extensive consultation with service providers, legal services, unions and offenders, among others. The standards and guidelines provide a strong national approach to the management of sex offenders. They include guiding principles and ethics for the provision of services, as well as guidelines on assessment, treatment, research, evaluation, and accountability.

PROGRAM GOALS

The assessment and treatment of sex offenders focus on identifying the nature and pattern of behaviour and developing strategies that may reduce the risk for reoffending.

Components of sex offender treatment programs include:

- attitude towards sexuality and relationships;
- empathy enhancement;
- anger management;
- cognitive strategies;
- relapse prevention skills; and
- techniques to reduce or control deviant arousal.

Program intensity is linked to offender risk and need. Moderate to high needs are met in intensive programs delivered in specialized settings, such as Regional Treatment Centres. Offenders who are identified at lower risk and need are matched with lower intensity, shorter duration programs in institutions and in the community.

HOW IS THE PROGRAM BENEFICIAL?

Some evidence indicates that the conditions of treatment for sex offenders can not only improve attitudes and social skills, but also can have an impact on sexual recidivism. This is particularly true for moderate- to high-risk sex offenders.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM

WHAT IS THE PROGRAM ABOUT?

The Violence Prevention Program is an intensive, cognitive-behavioural reintegration program for incarcerated federal offenders. The program, grounded in contemporary theory and research, is delivered by a mental health professional and a program officer. The aim is to assist offenders who have a history of violent behaviour and who present a risk for future violence.

Correctional Service of Canada

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- **Case Management Team**
- **Program Delivery Officer (PDO)**
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Phone: (506) 851-2031 Phone: (613) 536-4283
Fax: (506) 851-6316 Fax: (613) 530-3006

Phone: (450) 967-3355 Phone: (306) 975-5220
Fax: (450) 967-3463 Fax: (306) 975-5401

Phone: (604) 870-2575
Fax: (604) 870-2612

340 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0P9
Phone: (613) 996-4628
Fax: (613) 996-0428
Web Site: www.csc-scc.gc.ca

Marcel Kabundi, LL. M.; M.Sc. (criminology)
Manager, Ethnocultural Programs
Phone: (613) 996-9744
Fax: (613) 996-0428
E-mail: kabundimk.csc-scc.gc.ca

Yvette Beckles
Project Assistant, Ethnocultural Programs
Phone: (613) 947-0505
Fax: (613) 996-0428

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Aggression and violent behavioural problems are multidimensional. Because the targets of change are usually complex and multiple, the Violence Prevention Program takes a variety of rehabilitative approaches. The conceptual model integrates social learning and social information processing theories of violent behaviour. The program focuses on violent criminal activity and interpersonal aggression that is not based exclusively on anger or emotional control problems. The primary intervention approach is cognitive-behavioural and skills based, with an emphasis on violence (relapse) prevention. These intervention techniques are reinforced by a consistent strategy that emphasizes self-control, social problem solving, education, self-management, role playing, and homework assignments.

PROGRAM GOALS

The goal of the program is to improve the skills of the participants, and subsequently, to reduce the risk of future violence.

The key interventions (components) include:

- Making Change: orientation and the process of change;
- Violence Awareness: examining the personal origins of violence;
- Anger Control: basic skills of anger and stress management;
- Solving Problems: social problem-solving and information-processing skills;
- Social Attitudes: examining and reformulating the beliefs supporting violence;
- Positive Relationships: reducing victimization and intimate violence;
- Resolving Conflicts: communication and negotiation skills;
- Positive Lifestyles: restructuring the lifestyle triggers of violence;
- Self Control: developing short-term and long-term direction; and
- Violence Prevention: developing a comprehensive violence prevention plan.

The Violence Prevention Program is intended to help offenders who have committed two or more violent offenses or who are considered at high risk to commit violent crimes based on the Statistical Information on Recidivism scale (SIR).

The program consists of a maximum of 120 two-hour sessions. The program also includes at least three individual sessions that vary according to the needs of the participants, and two testing sessions. The program (excluding assessment sessions) is delivered in four months. Group sessions are two hours in length; each group has a maximum of 12 participants.

HOW IS THE PROGRAM BENEFICIAL?

The program helps offenders to develop, articulate, and manage a comprehensive violence (relapse) prevention plan, and it assists them in applying their plan to their environment and circumstances.

5. FAMILY VIOLENCE PROGRAM

WHAT IS THE PROGRAM ABOUT?

The Family Violence Program is focused primarily on male offenders who have been abusive in their family relationships, have a history of committing assaults, or have been identified at high risk of being perpetrators of abuse. The Family Violence Program focuses on teaching offenders that violence is a response learned through direct experience or modeling.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The Family Violence Program is modeled on existing family violence community programs with modifications to address specific offender needs, particularly in the community programs. Offenders have multiple needs on release, unlike most men attending mainstream community programs. CSC's program attempts to address offender needs in the community with pre- and post-treatment monitoring and relapse prevention components.

PROGRAM GOALS

The Family Violence Program teaches offenders to:

- acknowledge and accept responsibility for violent behaviour;
- understand and acknowledge the victim's perspective
- understand stereotypical gender roles and beliefs, and explore alternative views;
- recognize control tactics used in relationships, and consider alternative attitudes and behaviour;
- identify personal precursors to violence and develop alternative pro-social skills; and
- develop an offence prevention plan.

HOW IS THE PROGRAM BENEFICIAL?

The program targets the specific needs of offenders in controlling violent behaviour by offering a continuum of treatment from the institution to the community.

6. EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

WHAT IS THE PROGRAM ABOUT?

The CSC is determined to succeed in its goal of educating inmates so that they may compete lawfully in the community. To this end, the following education programs are available at minimum-, medium-, and maximum-security institutions:

- Adult Basic Education (Grades 1 to 10);
- Secondary Education;
- Vocational Education; and
- Post-secondary Education

Each program component provides offenders with opportunities to acquire education appropriate to their needs, achievement and ability

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Upon their arrival in institutions, approximately 60 percent of offenders test at an educational level lower then Grade 8, and 80 percent test lower than Grade 10. A research report completed in 1992, titled *Can Educating Adult Offenders Counteract Recidivism?*, indicates specific intellectual skills gained through Adult Basic Education (ABE) may equip offenders to deal more effectively with daily problems encountered in the community. Moreover, the sense of achievement and confidence that results from successfully completing such a program may encourage offenders to make further positive changes in their lives. A research update completed in 1996 confirmed results of the 1992 study.

PROGRAMMING CONTENT

Adult Basic Education

The ABE program is the education priority of the CSC. It has the highest enrollment of all the education programs (approximately 40 percent of the enrolled population). The course has been enhanced to the Grade 10 level for the completion of the academic components in areas such as math, language and science. Successful completion of the course gives offenders the essential skills with which to further their education, especially in areas where literacy is essential.

Secondary Education

The secondary education program leads to graduation at the Grade 12 level. Its enrollment is approximately 25 percent of the offenders who participate in education programs. Because a secondary-school diploma has become a prerequisite for securing lasting employment and for entry into a variety of training opportunities, inmates in Canada's federal correctional facilities are making personal commitments to this program in increasing numbers. Accreditation received upon successful course completion fulfills provincial secondary-school diploma requirements.

Vocational Education

Vocational programs are the choice of approximately 25 percent of all inmate students. These courses provide training in a range of job-related skills relevant to employment opportunities in the institutions as well as in the community. Some of the subjects taught by CSC's vocational programs are:

- welding and metal trades,
- hairdressing,
- small engine repair,
- auto mechanics and auto body repair,
- electronics,
- carpentry and cabinet making,
- upholstery,
- plumbing,
- cooking, and
- computer programming.

The vocational education programs include a generic skills component that is applicable to a number of vocational fields. This component addresses, at a minimum, industrial and shop safety, and personal and interpersonal skills for success in the workplace.

Post-secondary Education

Post-secondary education gives offenders the opportunity to acquire a trade or profession, as well as to update trade qualifications prior to their release. Fewer than 10 percent of participants in education programs opt for post-secondary education. Offenders generally pay for their own post-secondary studies, unless it can be demonstrated that the education addresses a specific need.

HOW ARE THE PROGRAMS BENEFICIAL?

All correctional programs call for group interaction that helps offenders learn and practice skills that will facilitate their reintegration and adaptation to private-sector work settings. These important skills are central to the core employability program CSC intends to develop and implement. Specifically, they include problem solving, critical thinking, punctuality, interacting with coworkers, being respectful of other people's opinions and feelings, and dealing with authority figures.

7. ETHNOCULTURAL PROGRAMS

WHAT ARE THE PROGRAMS ABOUT?

Canada's increasing cultural diversity presents new challenges for governments in ensuring the relevancy of their programs and services to the public they serve. Recent reports from Ontario (*Racism Behind Bars*) and British Columbia (*Census '93*) highlight the need for culturally appropriate programs and service along with multicultural training for offenders and sta

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Over the past several decades, immigrants have represented approximately 16 percent of Canada's population. It is estimated that visible minorities will constitute more than 20 percent of Canada's populatic by 2003. The origin of immigrants has also changed ir recent years, with an increasing proportion coming from Asia. Since 1961, the proportion of European-born immigrants arriving in Canada has been declinin steadily. The majority of the recent immigrant group: have come from Asia, Latin-America, Africa, and the Caribbean. This influx has highlighted cultural, religio and linguistic variety in Canada.

Given that Canada's visible minority population is increasing, we can anticipate that the representation of visible minorities in the correctional system will also rise. Providing culturally appropriate programs and services is important to assist the rehabilitation proces

PROGRAM GOALS

To ensure that the needs and cultural interests of offenders belonging to ethnocultural minority groups are identified, and that programs and services are developed and maintained to meet those needs.

PROGRAMMING CONTENT

Cross-cultural and Race-relations Training

Canadians are committed to building a society that respects and values differences and one in which everyone is entitled to equal opportunities without

fear of discrimination on the basis of colour, culture, or ethnic or national origin. Cross-Cultural and Race-Relations Training is an effective way to meet these goals. Training is designed to sensitize offenders and staff to different cultures and to foster cross-cultural awareness.

Cross-cultural Affirmation Programs

In order to understand the diverse cultural backgrounds of the offenders and staff, CSC organizes different activities. Black Inmates and Friends Assembly (BIFA), Italian groups, Chinese groups, Greek groups, Jewish groups, and others arrange activities that help raise their cultural identity and provide positive affirmation.

Positive and Motivational Reinforcement Programs

In order to increase the participation of ethnocultural offenders in core correctional programs, CSC uses positive and motivational reinforcement by identifying the desired behaviour, acknowledging each level of improvement, maintaining the desired behaviour and individualizing the reinforcement

Community Integration Program

The Community Integration Program provides information, as well as develops skills, that will facilitate the offender's reintegration into the community. Returning to the community after a long period of incarceration is not easy for most offenders. In order to make the transition, offenders need relevant and practical information. This program provides answers to questions on many topics related to living in an ever-changing society.

Linguistic Services

In a prison environment where rehabilitation and restrictions are day-to-day considerations, language takes on great importance. Ideally, both the service provider and recipient should speak the same language; however, this is not always the case in correctional systems with high numbers of diverse minority client groups. CSC policy guarantees minority offenders who have difficulty speaking English or French the right to interpreter services in quasi-judicial proceedings where the loss of liberty or privileges is at stake, such as disciplinary hearings, Parole Board hearings in institutions, and the review of parole conditions in the community. CSC keeps a list of staff who speak different languages and who would be suitable interpreters.

Ethnocultural Liaison Services

CSC reinforces its links with community organizations to help combat racism and racial discrimination. In addition, a service by ethnoculturally trained workers is provided to compensate for cultural differences in an effort to bridge the ethnocultural gap between offenders and case management personnel. For example, BIFA delivers the following programs and services: intake assessment; assistance with pre-parole, discharge planning, group counseling (Black heritage), and staff development (such as conferences, workshops, and seminars). BIFA exposes inmates to the range of community resources and support systems available upon release to assist in their successful reintegration into the community. Representatives from ethnocultural communities also play an advisory role in the correctional facilities.

HOW ARE THE PROGRAMS BENEFICIAL?

Providing programs and services that are appropriate for different ethnocultural groups can facilitate the rehabilitation process by responding to specific needs. Furthermore, ensuring the equitable treatment of ethnocultural offenders can help reduce the barriers they face while incarcerated.

8. HOW TO GET INTO THE PROGRAMS

Offenders must be referred to the various correctional programs through the case planning process. During the intake assessment, it is determined whether they meet the criteria for one or more programs.

Correctional Service Canada
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